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A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

King & Queen

AT

WHITE-HALL,

ON

CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1691.

By the most Reverend Father in GOD,

JOHN, Lord Archbishop of YORK,

Primate of *England* and Metropolitan.

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Heb. ix. 26.

Now once in the end of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf.

THis Text doth naturally ſuggeſt *Five* things to be inſiſted on, moſt of them proper for our Meditations on this Day; which therefore I ſhall make the Heads of my following Diſcourſe.

I. In general the *Appearance* of our Lord. *Now hath he appeared.*

II. The *Time* of that Appearance. *In the end of the World.*

III. The *End* and *Deſign* for which he appeared. *To put away Sin.*

IV. The *Means* by which he accompliſhed that *End*. *By the Sacrifice of himſelf.*

V. The Difference of *His* Sacrifice from the *Jewiſh* ones. His was but once performed; Theirs were every day repeated. If his Sacrifice had been like theirs; then (as you have it in the former part of the verſe) *muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the Foundation of the World; But now once in the end of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf.* This is the juſt Reſolution of the Text into its ſeveral particulars, of each of which I ſhall diſcourſe as briefly and practically as I can.

I. I begin with the firſt, The *Appearance of our Lord* in general. *Now hath he appeared.*

Let us here conſider, *firſt*, *Who* it was that appeared. And then, *How* he did appear.

The *Perſon* appearing we will conſider both as to his *Nature* and as to his *Office*.

He that appeared as to his *Nature* was *God* and *Man*; both theſe *Natures* were united in him and made one *Perſon*. He was *God with us*. So the Angel ſtiles him in the *firſt* of S. *Matthew*.

He was *the Word that was with God, and was God, and by whom all things were made.* He was, I ſay, that *Word* made *Fleſh* and *dwelling among us*. So S. *John* ſtiles him in the *firſt* of his Goſpel.

Laſtly, He was *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, ſo S. *Paul* ſtiles him in the *firſt* Epiſtle to *Timothy*.

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This was the *Perſon* that the Text ſaith, *Now appeared*, that is, the Son of God in Humane Nature. *God* of the ſubſtance of his Father begotten before all Worlds, and *Man* of the ſubſtance of his Mother born in the World. Perfect *God*, and perfect *Man*, and yet but one *Perſon*. For as the Reaſonable *Soul* and the *Body* make one *Man*; ſo here *God* and *Man* make one *Chriſt*. As our Creed expreſſes it.

And this leads me to his *Office*. This Divine *Perſon*, God-Man, that the Text here ſaith *appeared*, was, by his Office, the *Chriſt*, the *Meſſias*, that is, that great Miniſter of God, that Anointed *King* and *Prieſt* and *Prophet*, which from the beginning of the World he promiſed to ſend down upon Earth for the ſalvation of Mankind. Who was believed in by the Patriarchs; Typified by the Law; Foretold by all the Prophets; Shadowed out in all the Oeconomy of the *Jewiſh* Nation; expected by all the *Iſraelites*; And wiſhed for by the beſt of the Heathen World.

This *Perſon* inveſted with this *Office* at laſt *appeared*; and in what manner, you all know from his Story in the Goſpel.

He was by the Holy Spirit of God conceived in the Womb of a Virgin, as was foretold of him by the Prophets; of which an Angel of the higheſt order in Heaven firſt brought the happy Tidings to the Virgin her ſelf.

This

This Virgin, by as ſtrange a Providence, when the time of her delivery drew near, was brought from her own City and Habitation in *Galilee*, to *Bethlehem* a City of *Judah*, where ſhe brought forth this Illuſtrious Babe; And thereby fulfilled another Prophecy concerning him, namely, That he ſhould be born in *Bethlehem*, which alſo the *Scribes* at that time acknowledged.

The circumſtances indeed of his Birth were far from any outward Pomp and Magnificence. The Virgin his Mother was poor and a ſtranger; and ſo ill befriended, that in that Confluence of People with which the City was then crowded, ſhe was able to procure no better a lodging than the *Stable* of an *Inn*: ſo that a *Manger* was the place that firſt received the Lord of Glory. This Slur, this Affront God then thought fit to put upon all that external Splendour and Grandeur which uſually doth ſo much dazle the Eyes of mortal Men.

But God failed not to make abundant amends for the meanneſs of this *Birth*, by giving ſundry other demonſtrable Evidences of the Dignity of the *Perſon* that was then born.

For the *Magi* from the Eaſt (*Princes* ſhall I call them, or *Philoſophers?*) being conducted by a new Star, came and pay'd their Homage, and brought their Offerings to this King of the World in a *Manger*. And the Shepherds, that were watching their Flocks in the Fields by night, were ſurprized with the

the Glory of the Lord ſhining round about them, and an Angel that thus ſpoke to them; *Fear not, for behold I bring you Tidings of great Joy which ſhall be to all People, for unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Chriſt the Lord. And this ſhall be a ſign unto you, ye ſhall find the Babe wrapped in ſwadling Cloths lying in a Manger. And ſuddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of the Heavenly Hoſt, praiſing God, and ſaying; Glory to God in the Higheſt, on Earth Peace, Good Will towards Men.*

After this manner was the *Appearance* of our Saviour, and much after the ſame manner was his following *Life*. It was a life of much Poverty and Meanneſs as to outward cirumſtances; but it was a life in every Period of it fraught with Wonders. Whether we conſider the admirable Goodneſs and Charmingneſs of his Temper; or the exemplary Vertue and Piety that did ſhine out in all his Converſation; Or the Divinity of his Sermons and Doctrines; Or his prodigious inimitable Miracles; Or the Atteſtations which were given to him from Heaven; Or the uſage he received from Men; Or the Events which followed upon all theſe things in the World.

But it is his firſt *Appearance* in the *Fleſh* that we are this day met together to commemorate. And never had Mankind ſo Noble an Argument given them, to exerciſe their Thoughts and Meditations upon.

If we consider the *Quality* of the *Person* appearing, that he was no other than the Eternal Son of God: How ought we to be wrapt with Wonder and Astonishment at the Infiniteness of the Divine Condescension? How ought we to be affected with Love and thankfulness at such a never-to-be-paralleld instance of God's kindness to us, that he should *so love us as to send his only-begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.*

If we consider that this Son of God resolving to appear in the World, of all other ways chose to do it in our *Flesh*, and so united both the *Deity* and *Humanity* in one *Person*: O what a sense ought this to impress upon us of the Honour that is hereby done to our nature, and the Dignity it is advanced to? And how ought that sense, either to fright us, or to shame us from prostituting this our Nature to any vile unworthy Mixtures and Communications which God did not disdain to take into so neat a Relation to himself.

If we consider that this *God*, in humane *Flesh*, came as the *Messiah*, the Saviour of the World, so long before promised, and so long expected: How ought this to fill our hearts with Joy and Thankfulness? How should it move us to pour out our Souls in Benedictions to God for having thus *Visited and redeemed his People*? And putting us into that dispensation which so many Holy Men, for so many Ages, wished to see, but did not see it; nay,

nay, and which the Angels themſelves deſired to look into; and which the *Jews* for rejecting, at the time it was publiſhed, are, to this day, a ſtanding Monument of God's Diſpleaſure and Vengeance.

If we conſider the many Evidences, that this our Saviour gave at his Appearance, of his being the true *Chriſt*; How exactly in all the Circumſtances of his *Nativity*, and all the Paſſages of his *Life*, he fulfilled the Prophecies which went before of him; and how convincing the Teſtimonies were, which God gave to the Truth of his Miſſion: How ought this Conſideration to ſtrengthen our Faith in this Chriſt? To make us conſtant to the death in owning him for our Saviour, our *Meſſiah*, in Oppoſition to all the Pretences of the Jews, and Infidels, and Atheiſts, and Scepticks to the contrary.

Laſtly, If we conſider the mean Circumſtances that this our *Chriſt* choſe to appear in; ſo far below the Dignity of ſo great a Prince, that there is not the pooreſt Beggar's Child among us, but generally finds better Accommodation when it comes into the World: O what a Check, what a Rebuke ought this to be to that Spirit of Ambition, and Pride, and Vain-glory, that too often poſſeſſes us poor Mortals? How ought it to take off our admiration, and leſſen the too great eſteem we are apt to have of all outward Pomp and Greatneſs?

Nay, and to make us deſpiſe all the glittering Shews and Bravery of the World: Since God has given us ſo viſible a demonſtration, by the ſending his own Son into it, how little a Value he ſets upon theſe Things. But,

II. I proceed to the *Second* Point, which my Text leads me to ſpeak to, and that is the *Time* of our Saviour's *Appearance* here mentioned, *Once hath he appeared in the end of the World.*

You ſee here that the time of his Appearance is ſaid to be the *end of the World.* But how is that to be underſtood? If we take the expreſſion in the literal ſenſe, and as we commonly uſe it; the thing is not true. For there have already paſſed near ſeventeen hundred Years ſince our Saviour's Appearance; and yet the end of the World is not come, nor do we know when it will.

But there will be no difficulty in this matter, if we carefully attend to the Phraſe the Apoſtle here uſeth, and interpret it according to the Propriety of the Language in which it is delivered. The word in my Text is συντέλεια τῶν αἰώνων, which every body, that is verſed in the ſtyle of the New Teſtament, knows may be better and more naturally rendred the *Conſummation* or *Concluſion* of the *Ages*, than the *End* of the *World.*

For

For the understanding this Phrase, we must have recourse to the known *Idiom* of the *Jews*, who used to speak of the several *Oeconomies* and *Dispensations*, under which the World successively had been, or was to be, as of so many Αἰῶνες or *Ages*. The last of which *Ages*, and the Accomplishment and Completion of all of them, they held to be the *Age* of the *Messia*; beyond which they knew there was to be no other *Age* or *Oeconomy*. With reference to this way of speaking, the Times of the Gospel-dispensation are frequently called in Scripture, the *Last Times*, the *Last Days*, the *Fulness of the Times*, and in the Text, the *Consummation* or *Shutting* up of the *Ages*. The meaning of all which Phrases is no more than this. That the Times of the Gospel, that is, the Appearance and Revelation of our Saviour; though God intended them from the beginning, yet should they be the last of all Times. There should be several Dispensations set on foot in the World before they came; and when those *times* were fulfilled, when the Ends of those Dispensations were accomplished, then should our Saviour appear, and begin his Kingdom which should never be succeeded by any other.

This is the true meaning of Christ's appearing ἐν συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων, as the Text expresseth it, that is, not (as we translate it) in the *end of the World*, but in the last of the *Ages*, or at the time when the *Ages* were fulfilled and accomplished.

Now

Now what uſe we are to make of this Conſideration, the Apoſtle himſelf doth fairly intimate to us in the beginning of this Epiſtle: *God*, ſaith he, *who at ſundry times and in diverſe manners, ſpake in times paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath made heir of all things, and by whom he made the worlds.* And ſo he goes on to ſet forth the incomparable Dignity and Preheminence of this laſt Meſſenger of God, above that of either Angels or Men, by whom he had ſpoke to mankind before. But what is the inference he draws from all this? Why, that you may ſee in the beginning of the *ſecond* Chapter. *We ought therefore* (ſaith he) *to give the more earneſt heed to the things we have heard* (that is to ſay, the Doctrine of the Goſpel) *leſt at any time we let them ſlip. For if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward; How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation as was ſpoken to us by the Lord* Jeſus?

The Apoſtle's Argument here proceeds on this manner. God's Revelation of his Will to Mankind, and the diſcovery of his Grace and Goodneſs was not all at once, but gradual and by parts.

He firſt ſpake to Mankind by the *Patriarchs* who were burning and ſhining Lights in their Generations.

He afterwards ſingles out the Nation of the *Jews* to be his peculiar People, and to them he gives a written

written Law which was delivered to them *by Angels in the hand of* Moſes *their Mediator* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the *third* of the *Galatians*) which Law was a ſhadow or dark repreſentation of the Good things which were afterward to be revealed.

After this he ſends *Prophets* in a continual Succeſſion for ſeveral Ages, who do more clearly diſcover God's will to them; who call upon them *to* Holineſs and Virtue; and who ſpeak in very plain Terms of that *Great Salvation* which God ſhould one day manifeſt to the World.

And laſt of all, as the Lord of the Vineyard in the Parable dealt with his Husband-men, who after he had ſent Servants one after another, of different Qualities and Degrees, at laſt ſent his own Son: ſo at laſt, I ſay, did the great Lord of the World, *when the fulneſs of the time was come*, ſend his own Son to be his Embaſſador to Mankind, his own Son who was the *Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.*

If now, as the Apoſtle here argues: If under the former Diſpenſations when God only declared his Will by Angels or by Prophets, he was yet ſo ſevere that no Tranſgreſſion or Diſobedience eſcaped without a juſt recompence of Vengeance; *How can we eſcape if we neglect ſo great a Salvation*, as that was, which in theſe laſt days was *preached by Jeſus Chriſt? How can we eſcape*, if theſe laſt and greateſt Methods of God for our good, and in which all

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the Treaſures of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs are diſplayed; I ſay, if theſe have no effect upon us in order to the making us both Holy and Happy.

What Teachers, what Inſtructers can we further expect? What new Lights or Aſſiſtances do we yet wait for? Can any one think that God ſhould ſet on foot ſome other new Diſpenſation for the bringing off thoſe wretched People upon whom this laſt could prevail nothing? Do we dream of another *Covenant*, or another *Mediator* between God and Man, beſides *Chriſt Jeſus*? Do we fancy that God will ſend ſome other Embaſſador or Saviour into the World after he hath ſent his own Son? Or that the Son of God will come a *ſecond* time in Humane Fleſh, and again be crucified for us?

No certainly, God hath afforded the laſt and greateſt means for Man's *Salvation*, and no other is ever to be expected. *Chriſt hath once appeared in the end of the World to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*; and to thoſe that believe in him, and love him, and obey him, *will be appear the ſecond time to their Salvation.* But never will he *appear* again to make a new Reconciliation for thoſe Men, that are not reconciled to God by his firſt Appearance. To ſuch (as our Apoſtle ſpeaks in the *tenth Chapter*) *There remains no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a fearful expectation of Judgment and fiery Indignation to conſume the Adverſaries.*

III. The

III. The *Third* General Point I am to inſiſt on from the Text is the *End* of our Saviour's *Appeaarnce*; and that is here ſaid to be the *putting away of Sin. Once in the end of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin.*

This is that which the Scripture every where aſſigns as the Buſineſs and Deſign of Chriſt's coming. To run over all the particular Texts would be tedious in ſo plain a Caſe. I ſhall therefore only name *one* or *two.*

This is the account that S. *John* gives of his Appearance, 1. *Ep.* Ch. 3. *Ye know*, ſaith he, *that he was manifeſted to take away our ſins.*

And again, this is the account that the Angel gives to *Joſeph* a little before his Birth, *Mat.* 1. 20. *Fear not*, ſaith he, *to take unto thee Mary thy Wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghoſt. And ſhe ſhall bring forth a Son, and thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.* He was called *Jeſus* becauſe he was deſigned by God to be our *Saviour*; for ſo much that word imports. And he is therefore our *Saviour*, becauſe he *ſaves* his People from their *Sins*, which is in the words of the Text, *to put them away.*

But what is it to be *ſaved from our Sins*, or to *have our Sins put away*? Since the Salvation we have by Chriſt doth conſiſt in this, it is fit we ſhould a little more particularly inſiſt on it. In anſwer therefore to this Queſtion, we ſay that *two* things are implyed in Chriſt's *putting away Sin.*

Firſt his *ſaving* or delivering us from the *Guilt* of our Sins, and the *Puniſhment* due to them.

Secondly his *saving* or delivering us from the *Power* and *Dominion* of them.

In these *two* things consists the *Salvation* obtained for us by *Jesus Christ*; and if either of them was wanting, or was not effected, he would not be a compleat *Saviour*.

First *Christ appeared to put away Sin*, by delivering us from the Guilt and Punishment of it; that is to say, by procuring for us the Pardon and Remission of it.

This is the *Salvation* which *Zacbary* in his Hymn foretels *John Baptist* should publish to the World, *Luke* 1. *To give knowledge of salvation to his people for the remission of their sins.*

And this is that *Redemption* of Christ which S. *Paul* speaks of, 1 *Coloss.* 14. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*

And lastly, S. *Paul*'s Sermon to the Gentiles is, *Be it known unto you Men and Brethren, that through this Man Jesus Christ is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses*, *Acts* 13. And therefore much less certainly by the *Law of Nature*.

The effect of these Texts is, That all Mankind are Sinners, are *concluded under Sin*, *are become guilty before God*, as the Apostle speaks. The most innocent Person is not excepted. All without exception have by their Sins *fallen short of the Glory of God*. Means now for the freeing themselves from the *Guilt* of these Sins they have none, nor is it possible they should have, for

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that wholly depends upon the pleasure of Him to whom they have rendred themselves obnoxious; and that is God, the Governour of the World. Here therefore appears the infinite Mercy of God, and the Kindness of our Saviour. The Eternal *Word* interposeth and offers himself to become *Man*, and in that Person to make satisfaction for the Sins of the World. And God accepts the Terms. And hereupon a Covenant is made between God and Mankind; wherein God for his part upon account of this Mediation of Christ, promises Forgiveness of all Sins, to all true Penitents all the World over.

O joyful Tidings these! What ease is here to wounded Consciences? What comfort to despairing Sinners? What encouragement to all Men every where to repent.

If we consider Mankind in their pure *Naturals*, and as without Christ Jesus, this plainly was their Case. They did believe a Supreme God; and their Reason it is likely would tell them that God was Good and Merciful. But yet this Reason could discover no more than God's *general* Goodness to them that all along endeavoured to please and approve themselves to Him. But as for his Willingness to pardon and forgive Sinners, especially those that had offended Him by very grievous Crimes, or lived in a long habitual course of Wickedness; this they could not conclude from their Reason. Nay if they did reason as they justly might, they might rather be inclined to believe that he would not pardon such Criminals.

minals. For as their Reaſon told them, that God was *Good*: So the ſame Reaſon told them that He was *Juſt*, and had an infinite Regard to the Honour and Reputation of his *Laws*. Which Laws, their own Conſciences told them, they had heinouſly tranſgreſſed; nor had they any thing wherewith to compenſate or make ſatisfaction for the Tranſgreſſion of them: And therefore what could they expect from ſo *Juſt* a God, but to undergo the puniſhment they had deſerved.

This was a very uncomfortable Reaſoning. And yet ſuch a one it was, as there was no anſwer to be given to, in the State of *Nature*; and therefore in what a melancholy Condition were Mankind all the while? What encouragement had they ſeriouſly to ſet upon the Amendment of their wicked Lives? Or, if they did, what Fruit, what Comfort could they promiſe to themſelves by ſuch amendment?

But Bleſſed be God that hath removed us out of theſe uncertainties; Bleſſed be God that hath given us the greateſt aſſurance that is poſſible, of his Love and Kindneſs to the greateſt of Sinners; and conſequently laid the greateſt Obligation upon all Mankind to turn from their evil Ways.

He hath ſent his Son, his only Son into the World, on purpoſe to aſſure us of his good Will to us; to give a demonſtration of the unfeigned Love and Kindneſs that He bears to every Soul of the Sons of *Adam*; *that he would not have any of them periſh, but that they ſhould all come to the knowledge of the Truth*, and be ſaved. This

Son

Son of His, doth moſt Solemnly in the Name of his Father, proclaim Pardon and Remiſſion of Sins to every one that ſhould believe in Him. There is no Sinner excepted, even the *Oldeſt*, the *Greateſt*, the moſt *Enormous* of Sinners, if they will come in and and ſubmit to the Yoke of Jeſus Chriſt, have his certain Promiſe that they ſhall be received.

And leaſt any one ſhould fear the Divine *Juſtice*, upon account that there is no *ſatisfaction* made to it for his Sins: Our Lord hath taken care to remove that Objection. For he by the unvaluable Merits of his Perſon, and the free unconſtrained Offering up of Himſelf to an ignominious Death upon the Croſs, on the behalf of Mankind, hath made a full, compleat, and entire Satisfaction to God's Juſtice for all the Sins of the World, from the beginning to the end thereof.

So that now every one hath free Acceſs to God, and a Right to his Favour through the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt. And tho we have been never ſo bad, never ſo unworthy; yet if we have but the Hearts to forſake our Sins, and to come to Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall as certainly obtain the Acceptance and the Love of our Heavenly Father, as if we had been Innocent and never ſinned at all.

Nay God is not only willing to receive us, but he earneſtly begs and ſollicits us to take his Mercy. And ſo pleaſed he is at the Return of a Sinner, that our Saviour has told us *there is joy in Heaven* over ſuch a one. Nay *more joy among the Angels over a ſinner that repenteth; than over ninety nine juſt perſons that need no Repentance.*

O how welcome ought this News to be to us? How transported should we be at the infinite Kindness of God manifested to us by our Saviour? O! praised be God for his astonishing Love. For ever adored be our Lord Jesus, that has made a *Propitiation* for us by his Blood. O let us for ever kiss and hug the pretious unvaluable *Scriptures* of the *New Testament*, if there was nothing else in them but that *faithful Saying*, that Saying, *worthy of all Men to be received, That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*; to save you, and me, and all Sinners, even the greatest of Sinners.

O, who is there that is in his Wits, would chuse to be out of the Christian Dispensation; or be left to the Methods of *Nature* and *Philosophy* for the attaining their Happiness, as some loose People among us do sometimes talk. Were the natural Talents of Mankind exalted far above what they either are, or ever have been; yet I would value that one Saying, *That Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners*, more than all the Notions and Speculations of Reason and Philosophy. I would desire to *know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. I would, with the Apostle, *count all things as loss, nay, as Dung, in comparison of the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Saviour; and that I may be found in him, not having my own Righteousness, which is by Nature, but that Righteousness which is by the Faith of Jesus Christ, who gave himself for me*. And thus much of Christ's *appearing to put away Sin*, in the first Notion of that Expression.

But *Secondly*, Christ appeared also *to put away Sin* in another sense: That is to say, To destroy the *Power* and *Dominion* of it from among Men; to *abolish it*, so as that it should not henceforth *reign in our mortal Bodies*. *To free us from Sin*, as the Apostle speaks, that is, to enable us to lead holy and virtuous Lives. So that whereas Mankind heretofore *yielded their Members Servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity*; *so they should now yield their Members Servants to righteousness unto holiness*.

Thus to *put away Sin* was as principal an End of Christ's coming as the other before mentioned, may perhaps more principal: For the other, in true reasoning, may be said to be wholly in order to this. Certain it is, unless this End be attained, the other will signifie nothing to us: For we are not capable of any Benefit from that *Remission* of Sin which was purchased for us by Christ, until our Sins be *put away* by Repentance, and we become holy Persons by the change and renewal of our Natures.

Never therefore let us deceive our selves. Though Christ hath actually *put away* all the Sins of the World in the former sense by his satisfaction; that is to say, hath procured the Pardon of them; hath taken away the *Sting* of them, so as that they shall not be deadly to any: Yet all this is upon supposition that the *Strength* of them be taken away in us; that they have *no Dominion over us*; that we *mortifie* them in all our *Members*; that we daily die to them, and live a Life of Righteousness. All that Christ merited or purchased

for

for the World, will not do us the leaſt good, unleſs we be made conformable to him in his *Death* and *Reſurrection*, by our *dying to Sin and living to Righteouſneſs.*

And in truth, if we will mind it, the *putting away Sin* in this ſenſe of it, hath as great weight laid upon it in Scripture, and is as often aſſigned for the great End and Buſineſs of Chriſt's appearance as the other.

S. *John* tells us plainly, that *for this purpoſe was the ſon of God manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.*

And S. *Paul* likewiſe tells us, that he therefore *gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works.*

And *laſtly*, S. *Peter* gives the ſame account of his coming, *Acts* 3. 26. where he tells us, that therefore *God raiſed up his Son Jeſus*, that is, ſent him into the World (for his *raiſing up* there ſpoken of, as any one will ſee that looks into the Context, was not his being *raiſed* from the dead, but his being manifeſted to Mankind. For here the Apoſtle's buſineſs is to apply that Promiſe or Propheſie of *Moſes* unto our Saviour, *viz. that God would* in due thim *raiſe up to his People a Prophet like unto him*, whom they ſhould all be obliged to hearken to.) I ſay therefore *God raiſed up his Son Jeſus*, i. e. ſent him into the World, *that he might bleſs his People, in turning every one of them from their Iniquities.* This turning every one from their Iniquities was the great End for which our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was manifeſted unto Mankind.

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And indeed *Reason* will teach us all this as well as *Revelation*. For in the nature of the thing, none can be truly *Happy* but those that are truly *Pious*. And in the same degree and proportion that any one is *wicked*, or is under the power of his Lusts, in the same degree he must needs be miserable. So that if Christ came to be our Saviour, and in that, meant either to make us happy, or to keep us from being miserable; there was an absolute necessity that his first and principal Design must be to root out of our Nature all Sin and Wickedness; and to restore the Image of God in our Minds, which consists in unchangeable Purity and Holiness and Goodness.

Away therefore with all those *Hypotheses* that give such an account of Christs coming into the World, as to make the ultimate End of it, to be the freeing us from Hell and Damnation, and purchasing Heaven and eternal Life for us, but without any respect had to the renewing our Natures, or the making us sincerely Holy and Virtuous. All such Accounts of Christ's Undertaking, are monstrously unreasonable and absurd.

For not to insist upon the manifest Affront they put upon God's *Justice* and *Holiness*, in making Him the great *Patron* of *Sin*, whilst they assert Him to be the *Justifier* of wicked Men even whilst they continue wicked.

You cannot, as I said, but see (in the first place) how very much such Doctrins do disparage the Love of our Saviour and lessen his Undertaking. For whilst

He is here ſuppoſed to have Redeemed us only from his Fathers Wrath, and the Puniſhment conſequent thereupon; leaving us in the mean time to the wickedneſs and impurity of our own Nature, which alone without the acceſſion of any other external *Evil*, is a miſery great enough: He is hereby rendred but half a Saviour; One that freed us indeed from an *External* Evil, but left us irremediably expoſed to an *internal* one, as grievous as the other. One that delivered us from the apprehenſions of a *Gibbet*, or an *Executioner*; but could not or would not cure us of the inward *Sickneſſes* and *Maladies*, under which we languiſhed.

But this is not all. In the *ſecond* place, it ought to be taken notice of, what an abſurd inconſiſtent Motion of this kind of Doctrine gives us of the *Happineſs* of Mankind. For whilſt they ſuppoſe that a Man under the Power and Dominion of Sin, is capable of that Happineſs which Chriſt purchaſed for us in the other World (which Happineſs as both Scripture and Reaſon teſtifie, doth chiefly conſiſt in the enjoyment of God, and of his Excellencies and Perfections): They muſt at the ſame time ſuppoſe, that a Man may be rendred happy by the enjoyment of that of which he has no Senſe, no Perception; or rather, to ſpeak properly, that he is the happieſt Creature alive in the enjoyment of an Object to which he has the greateſt averſion and antipathy in the World. Which, if it be not an abſurdity, I know not what is. When *Light* can have Communion with Darkneſs, when *God* can have Fellowſhip with *Belial*; Then, and not till then, can a wicked Man,

Man, a Man that lives in Sin, and loves it, be capable of that Happineſs which Jeſus Chriſt hath purchaſed for us.

IV. The *Fourth* thing I ſhould ſpeak to from this Text, is the *Means* by which our Saviour brought to paſs the great *End* of his *Appearance*, viz. *the putting away of ſin*. Which Means are ſaid to be the *Sacrifice* of himſelf. *Now once in the end of the World, hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.*

Two things ſhould be done in order to a juſt Diſcourſe upon this point.

Firſt, To give an account, how the Death of Chriſt was a Means for *the putting away of ſin* in the firſt Senſe I gave, that is, the procuring the Pardon of it.

Secondly, How it was a Means of putting it away in the other Senſe, that is, the deſtroying or mortifying it in us.

But theſe things being Foreign to our preſent Buſineſs, and more proper for the Argument of a *Good-Friday* Sermon. I ſhall ſay no more of them, but proceed to my laſt point.

V. The *Fifth* and laſt thing obſervable from the Text, is the difference of Chriſt's *ſacrifice* whereby *he put away ſin* from the Moſaical ones. Which difference ſo far as it is here taken notice of, conſiſts in this. That the *Legal Sacrifices* for the Expiation of Sin were daily offered; But Chriſt offered the *Sacrifice of himſelf* but once. *Once in the end of the World*, &c.

The Apostle in this Chapter is discoursing of the Difference between the Law and the Gospel. And as to that Point, he insists much on the Difference of their Sacrifices. The Christians that owned the Gospel had but one Sacrifice, the Sacrifice of Christ once offered; whereas those that were under the Law were forced to have many. Nay, even the most solemn Sacrifice that God had appointed for the Expiation of their Sins was repeated once a Year, as the Apostle tells us in the Verse before my Text. But now the Sacrifice of Christ, which he puts by way of opposition to theirs, that was but once offered, and was never to be repeated. This is the Point with which he concludes this Chapter; two Verses after my Text, *Christ*, saith he, *was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time unto salvation.*

This is the Apostle's Doctrine, and I insist on it now, because all those that design on this day to receive the *Holy Sacrament* are concerned in it.

Let us from hence take notice, that in this Service of the *Holy Communion*, we are not to pretend to offer Christ as a Sacrifice to his Father. His Sacrifice was but once to be offered, and that was done 1600 Years ago; and in the Virtue of that Sacrifice once offered, all faithful Christians and sincere Penitents shall receive Remission of Sins, and all other Benefits of his Passion. But for us to think of offering Christ again as a Sacrifice, is in effect to put our selves into the same rank and condition with the unbelieving Jewes, that is, to need the repetition of the same Sacrifices every Year,

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nay every Day, which is the very reason for which the Apostle denys the Efficacie of them.

We do not indeed deny, but that every time we approach to the Lord's Table for the receiving of the Holy Communion, we offer Sacrifices to God: For we offer our *Alms*, which we beg of God to accept as our *Oblations*; and these in the Language of Scripture, are *Sacrifices with which God is well pleased.*

We likewise offer our *Sacrifice* of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving* to God for the Death of our Saviour. And all our *Prayers* and *Supplications* we put up in his *Name*, and in the *Virtue*, and for the Merits of that *Sacrifice* he offered to God in our behalf: And in so doing we *commemorate* that *Sacrifice* both to God, and before Men. And this is all, we are confident, that the Ancient Church meant, by the great *Christian Sacrifice* or the *Sacrifice of the Altar.*

But if we go further, if we will in the Communion pretend to offer up the Body and Blood of Christ in Sacrifice to God, that was once sacrificed upon the Cross: It is intolerable. It is a thing that was never dreamed of in the first Ages of the Church: It is directly contradictory to the Foundation of all the Apostles Argument and Discourse here in the Text; and the very supposal of it brings along with it many grievous Absurdities in the *Theory*, and something that looks like *impious* in the *Practice.*

And yet this is the constant and avowed Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *Rome*, in every *Sacrament* they have, and that is in every *Mass* that is said among

among them. The main buſineſs of that Myſtery they make to conſiſt in the Prieſt's offering up to God the very *Body* and *Blood* of Chriſt, the ſame *Body* and *Blood* that was once offered up at *Jeruſalem*; this they pretend to offer up as a Sacrifice every day: and they attribute to this their Offering the ſame Virtue and Efficacy that the Apoſtles and all Chriſtians have always attributed to the one *Sacrifice* of Chriſt upon the Croſs; that is, that it is *a true propitiatory Sacrifice for the Living and for the Dead*: And none among them dare deny this, under pain of an *Anathema*, as the *Council* of *Trent* hath ordered the matter.

Good God! whither will Intereſt and Faction and Zeal for a Party tranſport Men? But it is not my buſineſs to expoſe *them*, but to put you in mind of what concerns our ſelves, namely, as I ſaid, that when we come to the Lord's Table, we do not approach thither with a belief that our Lord Jeſus is there again *offered*, but only with a deſign to commemorate his *Sacrifice* that was once offered. We come not thither to *ſacrifice* Chriſt, but to be Partakers of his *Sacrifice*. We are not to feaſt God; but God there feaſts us, and that with the beſt Food in the World; ſuch Food as will nouriſh us to eternal Life, if we be worthy Gueſts: Only we muſt not *appear before God empty* at this Solemnity: We muſt *offer* to him of our *Subſtance*: We muſt *offer* our *Prayers* and *Supplications*, not only for our ſelves, but for all the World; but more eſpecially for all that are called by the Name of Chriſt; and among thoſe, moſt particularly for our own *Church*

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and *Kingdom*, and all Orders and Degrees of Men therein. We muſt *offer* likewiſe our ſelves, our Souls and Bodies a *living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reaſonable ſervice.* And laſtly, to conclude, we muſt *offer* our moſt hearty and affectionate Thanks to God Almighty, for that incomprehenſible Inſtance of his Love, in ſending Chriſt Jeſus to us to be our Saviour; for his wonderful *Birth*, for his holy *Life*, for his pretious *Death*, for his glorious *Reſurrection* and *Aſcenſion*, and for his *Interceſſion* for us at the right hand of God.

And O thou Bleſſed Saviour that haſt done all this for us, give us ſuch a lively Senſe of thy marvelous Love in leaving thy Glory, and taking Humane Fleſh upon thee, that thou mighteſt dwell among us, and inſtruct us in our Duty, and aſſiſt us in the performance of it, and encourage thereto by the glorious Hopes of a never dying Life, and at laſt make thy ſelf an Offering for our Sins: O let theſe things ſink ſo deeply into our Minds, and ſo wholly poſſeſs our Hearts, that we may entirely give up our ſelves to thee: That we may with our whole Souls embrace all thy *Doctrines* and *Revelations*: That we may endeavour in all our Actions to conform our ſelves to thy *Example*; and make it the Buſineſs of our Lives to be obedient to thy *Precepts*, to ſubmit to thy *Will*, and to be contented to be diſpoſed of by thee in all the Circumſtances of our Lives. O let nothing in thy Religion ever be an *Offence* to us. But enable us to hold *the Profeſſion of our Faith* in thee *without wavering*, in all the Tryals

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and Difficulties thou ſhalt think fit to expoſe us to; that ſo in Faith and Obedience, in Patience and Perſeverance, we may ever wait for, and at laſt obtain that *Crown of Righteouſneſs which thou haſt laid up for all that love thee, and expect thy* ſecond and more glorious *Appearance.*

To thee, O eternal Son of God, thou great Lover of Mankind; to thee, *who tookeſt upon thee to deliver man, and didſt not abhor the Virgins womb*; to thee, *who overcameſt the ſharpneſs of death, and didſt open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers*; to thee, O moſt dear, O moſt beloved, O moſt adorable Jeſus, be for ever given by us, and by all the Souls whom thou haſt redeemed, and by all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, all Honor, and Glory, and Praiſe, all Service and Love and Obedience, henceforth and for evermore.

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